

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 117948
ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY TEXT RECEIVED FROM WHITE HOUSE
APPROVED BY NEA:PWLANDE, ACTING
S/S-O :SRPVALERGA

-----053757 092056Z /41

O 092027Z MAY 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 117948

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, IN

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL LETTER DATED MAY 8 TO PRIME MINISTER
DESAI

1. PLEASE TRANSMIT TO PRIME MINISTER DESAI THE FOLLOWING
TEXT OF A PRESIDENTIAL LETTER DATED MAY 8, THE SIGNED
ORIGINAL OF WHICH IS BEING POUCHED.

2. BEGIN TEXT: QTE DEAR MR. PRIME MINISTER:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTERS OF MARCH 27 AND APRIL 4, WHICH
AMBASSADOR PALKHIVALA TRANSMITTED TO ME. BOTH THE QUES-
TIONS AND THE HOPES THAT YOU RAISED DEAL WITH CONCERNS THAT
ARE ALSO MUCH ON MY MIND.

I FULLY UNDERSTAND THAT THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION'S
INABILITY TO REACH A DECISION ON THE TARAPUR LICENSE MUST
HAVE CAUSED DEEP CONCERN IN INDIA. I APPRECIATE THE SKILL
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AND PATIENCE WITH WHICH YOU HAVE HANDLED THIS MATTER IN THE
LOK SABHA. THE NRC ACTION WAS CONTRARY TO THE STRONG RECOM-
MENDATION THAT I MADE FOLLOWING OUR MEETING IN NEW DELHI;
THEREFORE I HAVE SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS AN EXECUTIVE ORDER
AUTHORIZING THE EXPORT. THIS ORDER MUST LIE BEFORE CONGRESS

FOR 60 DAYS BEFORE IT ENTERS INTO EFFECT, AND SHIPMENT
WILL TAKE PLACE IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER UNLESS CONGRESS
SHOULD DISAPPROVE THIS EXPORT. I NEED HARDLY TELL YOU THAT
I WILL URGE CONGRESS IN ALL APPROPRIATE WAYS NOT TO TAKE

SUCH ACTION.

WITH REGARD TO THE OFFER OF HEAVY WATER THAT I MADE TO YOU IN NEW DELHI, I HAVE INSTRUCTED MY CONSUL GENERAL IN BOMBAY TO GET IN TOUCH WITH MR. SETHMA TO DISCUSS HOW THIS CAN BEST BE IMPLEMENTED. SINCE HEAVY WATER NOW ALSO COMES UNDER THE PURVIEW OF THE NRC, WE WILL HAVE TO CONSIDER CLOSELY HOW WE CAN BEST APPROACH THIS QUESTION.

I WANT TO ASSURE YOU THAT I REMAIN FULLY COMMITTED TO RESOLVING OUR DIFFERENCES ON NON-PROLIFERATION POLICY. I HAVE CLOSELY FOLLOWED AMBASSADOR GOHEEN'S TALKS WITH YOU AS WELL AS OTHER DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN AMERICAN AND INDIAN OFFICIALS. I AM DETERMINED, AS YOU ARE, NOT TO LET THE EXCELLENT RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES BE DAMAGED BY WHAT IS, I BELIEVE, A DISAGREEMENT OVER MEANS RATHER THAN ENDS. FRANKLY, ONE OF THE MAJOR CONCERNS OF BOTH THE NRC AND CONGRESS HAS BEEN THE FREQUENT MENTION IN INDIA OF POSSIBLE FUTURE REMOVAL OF INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS FROM NUCLEAR MATERIAL SUPPLIED TO INDIA BY THE UNITED STATES. I LOOK FORWARD TO DISCUSSING WITH YOU IN DETAIL HOW WE CAN BEST RESOLVE THIS AND OTHER ISSUES WITHIN THE CONSTRAINTS POSED BY OUR NATIONAL POLICIES.

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IN THIS CONNECTION, WE CONTINUE TO SEEK A SIGNIFICANT SALT II AGREEMENT WITH THE SOVIET UNION AS WELL AS A COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN. I BELIEVE THAT SECRETARY VANCE'S RECENT VISIT TO MOSCOW MADE PROGRESS IN THIS AREA AND WE WILL FOLLOW IT UP ACTIVELY. THE MAJOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS STATES MUST INDEED TAKE THE LEAD IN REDUCING VERTICAL PROLIFERATION AND INSTITUTING PROCEDURES FOR THE ULTIMATE NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT THAT YOU AND I SEEK. I AM DETERMINED TO DO MY PART.

IN YOUR LETTER OF APRIL 4, YOU RAISED QUESTIONS ABOUT ISRAEL AND SOUTH AFRICA AND THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT CLANDESTINE NUCLEAR EXPORTS NOT UNDERMINE OUR NON-PROLIFERATION OBJECTIVES. I APPRECIATE YOUR BRINGING THESE CONCERNS TO MY ATTENTION AND WOULD BE VERY MUCH INTERESTED IN RECEIVING INFORMATION AS TO THE NATURE AND SOURCE OF THESE REPORTS. MAY I SUGGEST THAT YOU DESIGNATE AN APPROPRIATE OFFICER OF YOUR EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON TO DISCUSS THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THIS QUESTION WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT OR NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL STAFF?

IN THE CASE OF ISRAEL WE NO LONGER HAVE A NUCLEAR COOPERATION PROGRAM AND THE SMALL AMOUNT OF FUEL TRANSFERRED EARLIER REMAINS UNDER INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS. ALL ACTIVITIES OF OUR PROGRAMS IN SOUTH AFRICA ARE FULLY SAFEGUARDED. THE RESUMPTION (OR CONTINUATION) OF THESE PROGRAMS WILL DEPEND ON THE AGREEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED TO

ACCEPT FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS. IN NEITHER CASE DO I BELIEVE THAT DIVERSIONS HAVE TAKEN PLACE. I NATURALLY SHARE YOUR CONCERN THAT CLANDESTINE EXPORT OF NUCLEAR MATERIALS OR TECHNOLOGY NOT UNDERMINE THE INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS SYSTEM. WE ARE TAKING MAXIMUM PRECAUTIONS TO PREVENT THIS; THE BEST WAY TO PREVENT PROLIFERATION, HOWEVER, IS TO HAVE ALL STATES PLACE THEIR PEACEFUL NUCLEAR ACTIVITIES UNDER INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS. THIS IS THE COURSE THAT WE HAVE
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URGED ON SOUTH AFRICA, ISRAEL, ARGENTINA, AND EGYPT AS WELL AS ON INDIA.

TURNING TO OTHER ISSUES THAT WE HAVE DISCUSSED IN OUR CORRESPONDENCE, MY DECISION TO DEFER PRODUCTION OF ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPONS IS MEANT TO GIVE THE SOVIETS AN OPENING TO EXERCISE THEIR OWN RESTRAINT IN CONVENTIONAL AND NUCLEAR ARMS PROGRAMS AND FORCE DEPLOYMENTS. I HOPE THEY WILL GIVE AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE. IT WAS A DECISION TO WHICH I GAVE LONG CONSIDERATION. ADVICE FROM YOU AND OTHERS WAS OF GREAT HELP TO ME AND I THANK YOU FOR IT. MY ULTIMATE DECISION WILL OF COURSE BE INFLUENCED BY THE EXTENT OF SOVIET RESTRAINT.

ON THE MIDDLE EAST, THE UNITED STATES REMAINS PLEDGED TO EXERT EVERY EFFORT TO BRING THE PARTIES TO AN AGREEMENT AND IS IN CONTINUING CONTACT WITH ISRAEL, EGYPT AND OTHERS INVOLVED. THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON, WHICH YOU CITE IN YOUR LETTER, HAS, I BELIEVE, IMPROVED SOMEWHAT IN RECENT WEEKS. THE UNITED NATIONS FORCE ESTABLISHED BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL FOR THAT AREA IS WELL ON ITS WAY TOWARD REACHING FULL OPERATIONAL STRENGTH, AND ISRAEL HAS BEGUN THE WITHDRAWAL TO WHICH IT IS PLEDGED. WE HAVE MADE CLEAR TO THEM OUR HOPE THAT WITHDRAWAL WILL BE COMPLETED EXPEDITIOUSLY. MEANWHILE, I HOPE THAT INDIA WILL GIVE ITS UNRESERVED SUPPORT TO THE VITAL WORK THAT THE UNITED NATIONS FORCE IS PERFORMING IN SOUTHERN LEBANON.

I PARTICULARLY APPRECIATE YOUR EFFORTS IN SEEKING A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT IN THE HORN OF AFRICA. PRESIDENT SIAD'S DECISION TO WITHDRAW HIS TROOPS FROM THE OGADEN WAS A WELCOME FIRST STEP, BUT A PERMANENT SOLUTION CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED BY A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. WE ARE FOLLOWING
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CLOSELY THE EFFORTS OF THE O.A.U. TO FIND A BASIS FOR PERMANENT STABILITY IN THE REGION. THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET

AND CUBAN COMBAT FORCES FROM THE AREA WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT STEP IN THAT DIRECTION. I AM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED AT THE

PROSPECT OF CUBAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN ERITREA WHICH WOULD ADD DANGEROUSLY TO REGIONAL DESTABILIZATION. I AM SURE YOU SHARE MY VIEW THAT THE PROBLEM OF ERITREA, LIKE THE OGADEN, REQUIRES A POLITICAL RATHER THAN A MILITARY SOLUTION.

AS A LAST POINT, MAY I EXPRESS MY ADMIRATION AND APPRECIATION FOR THE MANNER IN WHICH YOU HANDLED THE HIMALAYAN DEVICE PROBLEM. IF THERE IS ANY WAY WE CAN BE HELPFUL TO YOU WITH RESPECT TO ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING OR ANY OTHER ASPECT OF THIS UNFORTUNATE MATTER, PLEASE LET AMBASSADOR GOHEEN KNOW.

ROSALYNN AND I LOOK FORWARD WITH ANTICIPATION TO YOUR VISIT. I AM GLAD THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO VISIT SEVERAL PARTS OF OUR COUNTRY -- NOT ONLY TO ENABLE YOU TO SEE AMERICA BUT, EQUALLY, TO ENABLE A WIDE RANGE OF AMERICANS TO SHARE MY EXPERIENCE IN MEETING YOU.

SINCERELY,

JIMMY CARTER.

HIS EXCELLENCY
MORARJI DESAI
PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

END TEXT. VANCE

SECRET

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 26 sep 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS, NUCLEAR FUELS, LICENSES, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 may 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE117948
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: TEXT RECEIVED FROM WHITE HOUSE
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D780196-1126
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197805112/baaaeyps.tel
Line Count: 195
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7c783895-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2539799
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENTIAL LETTER DATED MAY 8 TO PRIME MINISTER DESAI
TAGS: PEPR, PPDC, IN, US, XF, XA, (CARTER, JIMMY), (DESAI, MORARJI)
To: NEW DELHI
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7c783895-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014